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# Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington, D.C. 20250 (202) 720-4330

Letter No. 2571

August 14, 1992

**NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT** -- The recently signed NAFTA agreement linking the trade of the United States, Mexico and Canada brings together 360 million consumers in a \$6 trillion market. Agriculture Secretary **Edward Madigan** says it forms the world's largest and richest trading bloc, and is a win-win for agriculture in the three nations. U.S. exports to Mexico are expected to increase \$2 billion. President **George Bush** said the NAFTA agreement will not compromise the environment or food safety. The agreement must be ratified by the three nation's legislative bodies. Congress is expected to begin consideration next spring. **Contact: Roger Runningen (202) 720-4623.**

**NUMBER OF FARMS IN THE U.S.** -- There are an estimated 2.096 million farms in the United States this year, down less than one percent from 1991. Seven states showed increases. Oklahoma (71,000 farms), Tennessee (88,000) and Washington (38,000) each gained 1,000 farms. Oregon (37,500) gained 500; New Jersey (8,500), Maryland (15,600), and Wyoming (9,200) each gained 200 farms. Twenty-eight states remained the same as a year ago, and 15 states showed a decline. Texas has the most farms, 183,000, and the most land in farms, 130 million acres, down one million from 1991. **Contact: Dan Ledbury (202) 720-3570.**

**FRIENDLY TREE** -- A tree that is native to Manchuria, China, has been found to have qualities that are of interest to city planners and nurseries. *Maackia amurensis* (the tree has no common name), does not need fertilizer. This reduces the possibility of polluting water sources. Peter van Berkum, a microbiologist with USDA's Agricultural Research Service, says the tree relies on bacteria in its roots to fix nitrogen as a natural fertilizer. Its slow growth doesn't break sidewalks and clog underground sewer lines as quickly as faster-growing trees. It can be grown in the northern half of the United States, and reaches a height of 60 feet. **Contact: Peter van Berkum (301) 504-7280.**

**MUSHROOMS AND DOGS DON'T MIX** -- Toadstools appearing on lawns can pose a toxic risk to dogs. Steve Nicholson, an Extension Service veterinarian with the Louisiana State University Agriculture Center, says the effects produced by toxins in mushrooms vary from stomach upset to lethal organ damage. Poisoning in cats occurs less often because they are less likely to eat fungi. Dogs of any age can be affected, but young animals are more curious, so they may be at greater risk. Pet owners should dispose of toadstools by putting them in the garbage. Nicholson says removing the temptation may save a trip to the animal hospital. **Contact: Steve Nicholson (504) 388-6598.**

**PORK TO THE CIS** -- Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan has announced the opportunity for sales of 30,000 metric tons of U.S. pork to the former Soviet Union. Madigan says the Export Enhancement Program initiative is an opportunity for U.S. pork producers and exporters to enter and compete in the market for high-value pork products in the former Soviet Union. **Contact: Larry McElvain (202) 720-6211.**

**TURNING CORNSTARCH INTO RAW MATERIALS** -- A new method of extruding cornstarch could provide a new multi-million pound market for starch. There are many uses of cornstarch. It is contained in plastics, absorbents, thickeners, foams, resins and cosmetics. The new system uses twin-screw extruders which modifies the starch through addition of chemicals, high temperature and pressure. The continuous process is more economical than the batch process presently in use. **Contact: Merle E. Carr (309) 685-4011.**

**BRIGHT FUTURE FOR CANOLA?** -- Like soybeans, canola yields both oil and meal. But canola has the lowest saturated-fat content of all major vegetable oils. The perceived health benefits of canola is driving renewed interest. Canola is the popular name of rapeseed varieties. It is gaining market share, currently at 10 percent of the world vegetable oil trade, and 7 percent of world meal trade. U.S. domestic use should reach 315,000 metric tons in the '91/'92 marketing year, up 185 percent from '87/'88. Market potential could support 1.5 million acres. This year 160,000 acres were planted in the U.S. **Contact: Ian McCormick (202) 219-0840.**

**AN APPLE A DAY** -- U.S. apple production is expected to be higher this year at 10.1 billion pounds, 2 percent above last year. Recovery of European production may soften prices in 1992/93. **Contact: Dennis Shields (202) 219-0883.**

**1890s RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM** -- "1890 Land-Grant Colleges and Universities: An Investment for the 21st Century" is the theme of the Ninth Biennial Research Symposium sponsored by the Association of Research Directors. It is scheduled to be held Oct. 4-8 in Atlanta, Ga. Papers will be presented in four areas: animal science; food science and human nutrition; plant and soil science; and rural development. **Contact: James Shuford (205) 851-5783.**

**MEAT & POULTRY INSPECTION AGREEMENT** -- The United States and Mexico have reached an understanding on food inspection that allows U.S. meat and poultry plants to continue exporting products to Mexico. "Both countries will use the same criteria and guidelines when reviewing each other's meat and poultry plants," says Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Ann M. Veneman. "This keeps in place stringent food safety standards, while proving the same certification procedures." Mexican agriculture officials had threatened to stop all U.S. meat and poultry exports from entering Mexico until Mexican officials certified more than 500 U.S. plants that routinely export their products to Mexico. **Contact: Jim Greene (202) 720-0314.**

**FOOD IS A BARGAIN IN THE U.S.** -- Among 18 world-wide capitals the cost of a 15-item food basket is the highest in Tokyo, totaling \$151, compared to \$52 in Washington, D.C. In a survey conducted by USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service, the same goods totaled \$108 in Stockholm, \$67 in Paris, and \$65 in Rome. Brasilia had the lowest cost for the basket of retail food, just \$22. **Contact: Thomas St. Clair (202) 720-6821.**

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## FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

**AGRICULTURE USA # 1836** -- Some of the nation's needy children are getting good balanced meals, even though school and the school lunch program, have been out for the summer. Gary Crawford reports. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

**CONSUMER TIME # 1318** -- Plants that eat pollutants; "Change it yourself" public policy; job opportunities for L.A. riot victims; the "greening" of L.A. riot zones; U.S. foods going over big in Taiwan. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

**AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1827** -- USDA News Highlights; North American Free Trade Agreement complete; don't lose beneficial interest; irrigation and water quality; Taiwan a growing export market for farm products. (Weekly reel of news features.)

**NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1533** -- Marvelous milk; milk for the military; the great cheddar caper; mozzarella and the law; ripening trigger. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

**UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE** -- Wed. Aug. 19, mushroom production, fruit/tree nut outlook; Thurs. Aug. 20, U.S. agricultural outlook, Pacific rim outlook, farm trade update, catfish production; Fri. Aug. 21, cattle on feed, wheat outlook, livestock/poultry update; Mon. Aug. 24 world poultry situation; Tues. Aug. 25, crop/weather update, feed outlook. **These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.)**

**DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.**

Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

## FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

**FEATURES** -- DeBoria Janifer reports on urban gardening; Joe Courson reports on a method to increase cantaloupe production; and Kelly Bostrom reports on the search for a low-fat tortilla chip.

**ACTUALITIES** -- Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman on the North American Free Trade Agreement; USDA chief meteorologist Norton Strommen on the latest weather and crop developments; and USDA World Agriculture Outlook Board chairman James Donald on the latest crop estimates.

**UPCOMING FEATURES** -- DeBoria Janifer reports on a new pest threat in the U.S.; the Asian gypsy moth; Patrick O'Leary reports on a conservation farm demonstration project; and Lynn Wyvill reports on Annual Medics crop research.

**EVERY OTHER WEEK** -- Agriculture Update, five minutes of USDA farm program information in "news desk" format with B-roll.

*Available on Satellite Galaxy 6, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., EDT.*

## OFFMIKE

**CONDITIONS ARE SO GOOD...**most small grains farmers are groping for something to complain about, says **Mike Hergert** (KKXL, Grand Forks, N.D.). Mike says temperatures have been cool enough to substantially reduce disease problems. Harvest is underway on an excellent small grains crop. Programming has been expanded to fill a need: Mike now offers potato markets to his listeners. He also produces a special series at 7:50 a.m. each weekday morning, Monday through Friday. Subjects are farm production, women in agriculture, innovations in agriculture, farm management, and international agriculture.

**NEW FACILITY...**for processing meat has helped to boost meat production in the area served by **Mike LePorte** (KRVN, Lexington, Neb.). Mike says that shortly after the new processing operation was opened in Lexington, local producers began expanding their herds. Mike also says that the impact on the corn crop of the late freeze last May 31 is becoming apparent. Mike terms it "rough looking" corn. Yields will be down. It's a situation prevalent in many sections of the midwest.

### ***Farm Broadcasters Letter***



Office of Public Affairs  
Radio-TV Division  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Washington, D.C. 20250-1300

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**WHEAT HARVEST...**in the Northwest is ahead of normal, says **Wey Simpson** (KAQQ, Spokane, Wash.). Dryness has speeded development, but lowered yields. Wey says apple production in the state is forecast to be one of the bigger crops in recent years. Most orchards are irrigated.

**NEW FM STATION...**in Bushnell, Ill. is broadcasting the AM programming of WLRB, Macomb, Ill., says **Rick Bulger** (WLRB, Macomb). The FCC has established Local Marketing Agreements that allow such arrangements. Rick says the new station brings agricultural programming into a region not otherwise served by his broadcasts.

**A SHOPPING SPREE...**challenge at a local supermarket was issued to the mayor by **Emory Kleven** (KMNS, Sioux City, Iowa). Sponsored by the Iowa Soybean Promotion Board, whoever found the most products containing soybeans would have the food donated to the local food bank. Emory won. He placed in his shopping basket \$150 worth of foods that contained soybean products.

**VIC. POWELL**

Chief, Radio and TV Division